

News from SALEM COUNTY Office of Public Information

Mr. Robin B. Weinstein, Public Information Officer Office Phone: (856) 935-7510 ext. 8202 After Hours: (856) 297-5433

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 21, 2008

PROGRESS REPORT ON SALEM COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

(SALEM, NJ)—Freeholder Deputy Director David Lindenmuth, Chair of the County Public Safety Committee, and Prosecutor John Lenahan today reported on the progress of the Law Enforcement Enhancement Program (LEEP) that was initiated in 2005 is achieving great results and an expanded role in the ever-changing role of law enforcement.

"The LEEP has provided county police officer with innovative and worthwhile training in order to enhance their law enforcement skills and help each and every law enforcement officer to be prepared in meeting the daily challenges of police work," said Deputy Director Lindenmuth. "Our law enforcement community is second to none in the State of New Jersey. The leadership offered by Prosecutor Lenahan has ensured that our law enforcement community has the tools necessary for success."

The Salem County Prosecutor's Office has made training a top priority and since the inception of LEEP has modified the program to keep pace with the changing environment that law enforcement officials must confront daily.

"The 2008 LEEP training schedule has surpassed initial expectations and has emphasized quality in-county training that ensures our Salem County Police Officers are well trained without wasting valuable resources," said Prosecutor Lenahan. "Our LEEP Training Coordinator, Robert Bratty, has the essential experience to bring theory into practical terms for our law enforcement community."

Robert Bratty, an Upper Pittsgrove Township resident and a retired Captain with 26 years of experience with the New Jersey State Police, has headed the LEEP since September 2007. Mr. Bratty has a B.S in Law & Justice from Glassboro State College (now Rowan University) and a MA in Education Administration from Seton Hall University.

"The goal of the Training Coordinator was to bring LEEP training towards the goal that we envisioned," said Deputy Director Lindenmuth. "Prior to the LEEP, the Salem County Prosecutor's Office had sporadic in-county police training and yearly mandatory training requirements were left to seven municipal police departments to satisfy on their own. This was not only redundant and time-consuming, but it also cost the tax payers more

money because our police officers would have to travel out of the County for training. It is common-sense that we have our own in-County training that emphasizes quality and efficiency. LEEP saves money and improves services."

Between September 1, 2007 through December 31, 2007, 9 LEEP training classes were presented with a total of 230 students attending. In 2008, the Salem County Tactical Team began monthly training to hone their tactical skills. Every month the tactical team trains at different venues throughout Salem County. The tactical team is comprised of trained officers from the Salem County Prosecutor's Office and Municipal Police Officers, including the Salem County Sheriff's Department. Since January 1, 2008, LEEP has provided 9 training events with 278 police officers attending.

"Their commitment to monthly training is extremely important for them to maintain proficiency in tactical operations," said Prosecutor Lenahan. "The LEEP training calendar for 2008 consists of 58 separate training days, which includes the County Mandatory In-Service Training along with the 2008 Mandatory 'Active Shooting Course."

According to Governor Corzine's Strategic Actions for Violence Elimination ("SAVE") Plan, active shooter situations have caused law enforcement to approach situations like Columbine High School's tragedy with an entirely new mindset.

"We can never allow something like Columbine to happen in Salem County or anywhere for that matter," said Deputy Director Lindenmuth. "The safety of our residents is paramount. The Active Shooter Course assists our police officers in following the directives from the State so that no longer will law enforcement passively stand by and await the arrival of special response units to handle the event. Now, the first arriving field personnel are expected to aggressively pursue and confront the suspects in order to minimize the risk to the students and teachers."

Prosecutor Lenahan and Deputy Director Lindenmuth both praised the commitment of the law enforcement community and pledged their full support to ensuring that they have the tools necessary to do their job.

"Each and every Chief within Salem County has supported the LEEP and has made strong commitments to give their officers the best possible training and we are committed to them to make it happen," said Lenahan and Lindenmuth.